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[From the Newburyport Daily Herald.]

LETTERS TO A PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER.

No. I.

My ———: You "are about taking charge of a Primary School, and want advice." Well,—I am not sure my "notions" in regard to your vocation will be of any advantage to you; but notions I have, and, such as they are, quite at your service. Other engagements so take up my time and thoughts, that I shall be compelled to write in haste. The most you will get will be *hints*, worth something or nothing, as you can judge after reading them.

You undertake your work for the honorable purpose of getting a livelihood. I hardly need say to *you*, unless you add to this the sincere desire to do good, and an earnest determination to devote yourself to your office as your first duty, you had better resign your intentions. School-keeping, merely as a *business*, is the hardest kind of business,—task work unadorned and unrelieved, without pleasure and almost without profit. You must give your heart, your time and your thoughts, principally, to your school, if you would keep it with comfort to yourself, satisfaction to your employers, and benefit to your scholars. You must make your profession a study; and not dream that you can learn it in a day, or discharge its duties by instinct. I should recommend to you, therefore, to read carefully and thoughtfully the best of the many works on education, such, e. g., as the "Common School Journal," the "Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education," "The Lectures" delivered before the "American Institute of Instruction," "The School and the Schoolmaster," "The Teacher," and other books that you can easily obtain. Do this, and you will not need counsel from me; for then you will have advisers of experience, instead of one who, as you well know, is almost wholly a theorist.

I am not certain whether you are to occupy a room already "fitted up," or whether you are to have any voice in its arrangement. As the latter may be the case, I will say a word about the plan of a schoolroom. Endeavor to get a good, spacious entry, with rows of wooden pins or iron hooks, num-

bered and within reach of your children. Let each child have one for his cap, &c., and see that he always uses it. If your Committee are generous and judicious, ask them for a long iron *scraper* and a large, strong mat. If you cannot attend to the using of these yourself, let a trustworthy boy act as monitor, and be sure no mud and dirt are brought into the schoolroom. A sink, apparatus for washing, a clothes-brush and a comb, I should deem indispensable; and I should recommend their free and vigorous use, in all good nature, however, until you have succeeded in producing in your scholars, either before they come or after they come to school, that regard for *neatness*, which Whitefield once said was next to *godliness*. If you should add to your requirements a pocket handkerchief for each little nose, to be applied as a precaution against snuffing, I do not think you would trouble the rich or oppress the poor, or be a "bit too particular." Poor clothes and patched clothes may be the best the industrious parents of some of your scholars may be able to procure for them. Never let such marks of honest poverty be treated with ridicule or contempt. But water costs nothing; therefore gently, pleasantly, but yet uniformly and firmly, insist on cleanliness. The children will feel better, and you will be doing not a little to inspire them with self-respect and teach them good habits.

I once thought that a seat and a desk for each scholar were desirable, even in a Primary School, and I am not now quite sure they are not. I incline, however, to think the desk may be dispensed with, and the plan I have seen in some schools, of having chairs alone, a good one. These chairs are small and stout, with inclined backs and fastened to the floor. On one side of the room is a long low desk, with a narrow black-board fixed to the wall above it. To this desk platoons of scholars can come, from time to time, with their slates, and copy figures, &c., from the black-board, standing. At the opposite side of the room is a shelf, divided into as many compartments or pigeon-holes as there are pupils; these are numbered, as are likewise the chairs, to correspond with the numbers of the pegs in the entry, and each child has one assigned him as a place of deposit for his books and slate. If you can have your room thus arranged, I think you will like it. By dispensing with the desks, you get rid of the disposition to make *pillows* of them, the trick of scratching them, or the worse trick of drawing pictures upon them with wet fingers and washing and wiping them with sleeves and handkerchiefs. And the change of position required to go to *the* desk and the shelf, is rather desirable than otherwise, in a school of young children who were never made to keep *still* for any length of time. A recitation seat *behind* the scholars,—a large black-board, with a trough wherein to keep the chalk and catch the dust, and a piece of sheep-skin wherewith to clean said board,—a Yankee clock that strikes the hours,—a small hand-bell,—a set of "Outline Maps,"—a table and chair for yourself,—brushes, pails, dippers, &c., &c., and a closet to keep them in; these, if you can get them, will all come in play, and, if you or your

committee understand your work, will not be deemed non-essentials.

Another thing be sure to have, at some rate or other, viz., means for the thorough *ventilation* of your room. I have something to say on this point, and so much that I must defer it till I write again.

Wishing you a good beginning, I am, yours, &c.,

UTOPIA.

RHODE ISLAND.

THE legislature of Rhode Island, at its recent session, has taken the first step towards the improvement of her system of Common Schools, by authorizing the governor to appoint a superintendent or agent to visit different parts of the State, ascertain the number who attend school, the studies pursued, the books used, the qualification of the teachers, the defects of the school law, and to report on the whole subject. The thanks of the State and of the friends of education everywhere are due to the Hon. Wilkins Updike, of Kingston, for the introduction and successful advocacy of this measure. It is seldom that our public men will take pains to inform themselves on this great subject, or do more than turn off a few well-rounded periods on the necessity of wise and liberal provisions for the education of the people. But Mr. Updike, it seems, during the past year has visited the different schools in his county, ascertained their defects, brought the subject before the people in their district meetings, informed himself of what had been done or was doing to improve schools in other States; and, thus prepared, framed a bill, which he had the gratification to see pass both branches of the General Assembly, as a preliminary step for the improvement of the Common Schools of the State. The following communication, from a gentleman who has recently visited the schools of Providence, and was present during the discussions on Mr. Updike's bill, will prove interesting.

Providence, Nov. 5, 1843.

The friends of popular education have not been in the habit of looking to Rhode Island for light or encouragement in regard to Common Schools, and yet I know not a more efficient or successful system of public schools than now exists in the city of Providence, or a wiser measure for the improvement of the schools in the State generally, than the one just adopted by the General Assembly. The system in this city embraces four grades of schools, viz., Primary, Intermediate, Grammar and High Schools, and it is in contemplation to open one or more evening schools for young persons, such as apprentices, who cannot attend during the day. The schoolhouses are all new, embracing the latest improvements in their structure and internal arrangements, and are kept in the most perfect order. The teachers as a class are well qualified, as to intellectual attainments, manners and moral character, and deeply interested in their schools. The course of instruction embraces a thorough

English education and the preparatory classical studies. The schools are free, and their privileges are enjoyed by more than four thousand pupils, from all classes of the community, the rich and the poor, the capitalist and the laborer, the more and the less educated. The cost of the system to the city does not amount to five dollars for each person attending school. This is much cheaper than the school system of Boston, New York, or Philadelphia, and yet the course of instruction is as extensive and thorough, and the number of children educated in proportion to the population, larger. The success of the Providence system, and the completeness of all its details, is to be attributed to the constant, intelligent, and judicious supervision of Mr. Bishop, the superintendent, under the direction of a most faithful School Committee, to whom the whole care of the schools is entrusted.

The success of the Providence schools has already attracted much attention in different parts of this State, and there seems to be a general wish to see what can be done to improve the Common Schools in the country. I have just returned from Kingston, and was much gratified to witness the unanimity with which a measure, introduced by Mr. Updike, was carried in both branches of the legislature. Mr. Updike has made himself well acquainted with the workings of the present system in his own section of the State, and with the improvements which are in progress in other States and countries. He has visited the schools in his vicinity, and addressed the people from time to time, on the subject. His remarks in the House on his bill, which provides for the appointment of an agent to collect and disseminate information as to the condition and improvement of the schools and of the school law, were well timed, and well received. He is a very popular speaker, and he set forth the necessity of doing something, and the expediency of the mode proposed in his bill, with such clearness and power, that it passed both the House and Senate without a dissenting voice. If the friends of the schools in the different towns and districts will coöperate in this spirit with the agent in collecting information, suggesting and discerning remedies for existing defects, both in the organization and administration of the school system, Rhode Island may have, in a few years, as good schools as can be found in New England, if not better.

H. B.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

A Treatise on Domestic Economy, for the use of Young Ladies at Home and at School. By MISS CATHERINE E. BEECHER. Revised Edition, with Numerous Additions and Illustrative Engravings. Boston: Thomas H. Webb & Co. 1843.

WE propose, in a notice of this work, to discuss the question, whether the subject of domestic economy is a proper one for school instruction. This, we think, can be satisfactorily shown;

and, moreover, that, on many points within its province, instruction may be successfully given in school, not only to young ladies, but to boys.

The first three chapters are upon the peculiar responsibilities and difficulties of American women, and the remedies. This is a very interesting and important part of the work. A view is taken of the circumstances which render the situation of an American woman a desirable and an honored one. This is done not for the sake of gratifying her vanity, but to make her aware of the necessity of preparing herself to meet her responsibilities and overcome the difficulties of her position. Her situation is peculiar. Her education must be so. She has higher duties, a higher destiny to fulfil, than belong to the females of despotic countries. She should have a higher and more finished education. After a somewhat colored picture of the advantages of woman under our forms of government, we have the following strong statement of momentous truths:—

“The success of democratic institutions, as is conceded by all, depends upon the intellectual and moral character of the mass of the people. If they are intelligent and virtuous, democracy is a blessing; but if they are ignorant and wicked, it is only a curse, and as much more dreadful than any other form of civil government, as a thousand tyrants are more to be dreaded than one. It is equally conceded, that the formation of the moral and intellectual character of the young is committed mainly to the female hand. The mother forms the character of the future man; the sister bends the fibres that are hereafter to be the forest tree; the wife sways the heart, whose energies may turn for good or for evil the destinies of a nation. Let the women of a country be made virtuous and intelligent, and the men will certainly be the same. The proper education of a man decides the welfare of an individual; but educate a woman, and the interests of a whole family are secured.”

The peculiar difficulties pointed out are,—1. Poorly qualified domestics; 2. The peculiar delicacy of the constitution of American women; 3. The evils incident to a residence in a new country. The remedies suggested are:—

“In the first place, the physical and domestic education of daughters should occupy the principal attention of mothers, in childhood; and the stimulation of the intellect should be very much reduced. As a general rule, daughters should not be sent to school before they are six years old; and, when they are sent, far more attention should be paid to their physical development than is usually done. They should never be confined, at any employment, more than an hour at a time; and this confinement should be followed by sports in the open air. Such accommodations should be secured, that, at all seasons, and in all weathers, the teacher can, every half hour, send out a portion of her school, for sports. And still more care should be given to preserve pure air in the schoolroom. The close

stoves, crowded condition, and poisonous air, of most school-rooms, act as constant drains on the health and strength of young children. In addition to this, much less time should be given to school, and much more to domestic employments, especially in the wealthier classes."

"A second method of promoting the same object, is, to raise the science and practice of Domestic Economy to its appropriate place, as a regular study in female seminaries."

"The third method of securing a remedy for the evils pointed out, is, the endowment of female institutions, under the care of suitable trustees, who shall secure a proper course of education."

"The last method suggested for lessening the evils peculiar to American women, is, a decided effort to oppose the aristocratic feeling, that labor is degrading; and to bring about the impression, that it is refined and lady-like to engage in domestic pursuits."

The fourth chapter is on Domestic Economy as a branch of study; and we have omitted many observations which occurred to us upon the subjects of the former chapters, that we might give more especial attention to this.

"The greatest impediment to making Domestic Economy a branch of study, is the fact, that neither parents nor teachers realize the importance, or the practicability of constituting it a regular part of school education.

"It is with reference to this, that the first aim of the writer will be, to point out some of the reasons for introducing Domestic Economy as a branch of female education, to be studied at school.

"The first reason, is, that there is no period, in a young lady's life, when she will not find such knowledge useful to herself and to others. The state of domestic service, in this country, is so precarious, that there is scarcely a family, in the free States, of whom it can be affirmed, that neither sickness, discontent, nor love of change, will deprive them of all their domestics, so that every female member of the family will be required to lend some aid, in providing food and the conveniences of living; and the better she is qualified to render it, the happier she will be, and the more she will contribute to the enjoyment of others.

"A second reason, is, that every young lady, at the close of her school days, and even before they are closed, is liable to be placed in a situation, in which she will need to do, herself, or to teach others to do, all the various processes and duties detailed in this work. That this may be more fully realized, the writer will detail some instances, which have come under her own observation.

"The eldest daughter of a family returned from school, on a visit, at sixteen years of age. Before her vacation had closed, her mother was laid in the grave; and such were her father's circumstances, that she was obliged to assume the cares and duties of her lost parent. The care of an infant, the management of young children, the superintendence of domestics, the

charge of family expenses, the responsibility of entertaining company, and the many other cares of the family state, all at once came upon this young and inexperienced school girl.

"Again; a pupil of the writer, at the end of her school days, married, and removed to the West. She was an entire novice in all domestic matters; an utter stranger in the place to which she removed. In a year, she became a mother, and *her health failed*; while, for most of the time, she had no domestics at all, or only Irish or Germans, who scarcely knew even the names, or the uses, of many cooking utensils. She was treated with politeness by her neighbors, and wished to return their civilities; but how could this young and delicate creature, who had spent all her life at school, or in visiting and amusement, take care of her infant, attend to her cooking, washing, ironing, and baking, the concerns of her parlor, chambers, kitchen, and cellar, and yet visit and receive company? If there is anything that would make a kindly heart ache, with sorrow and sympathy, it would be to see so young, so amiable, so helpless a martyr to the mistaken system of female education now prevalent. 'I have the kindest of husbands,' said the young wife, after her narrative of sufferings, 'and I never regretted my marriage; but, since this babe was born, I have never had a single waking hour of freedom from anxiety and care. O! how little young girls know what is before them, when they enter married life!' Let the mother or teacher, whose eye may rest on these lines, ask herself, if there is no cause for fear that the young objects of her care may be thrown into similar emergencies, where they may need a kind of preparation, which as yet has been withheld."

Many similar examples occur to us, as they must to every one who has had any opportunities of witnessing the vicissitudes incident to American females. Ought not school education to do something to arm women against such fearful sufferings?

Our author proceeds:—

"Another reason for introducing such a subject, as a distinct branch of school education, is, that, as a general fact, young ladies *will not* be taught these things in any other way. In reply to the thousand-times-repeated remark, that girls must be taught their domestic duties by their mothers, at home, it may be inquired, in the first place, What proportion of mothers are qualified to teach a *proper* and *complete* system of Domestic Economy? When this is answered, it may be asked, What proportion of those who are qualified, have that sense of the importance of such instructions, and that energy and perseverance which would enable them actually to teach their daughters, in all the branches of Domestic Economy presented in this work?

"It may then be asked, How many mothers *actually do* give their daughters instruction in the various branches of Domestic Economy? Is it not the case, that, owing to ill health, deficiency of domestics, and multiplied cares and perplexities, a

large portion of the most intelligent mothers, and those, too, who most realize the importance of this instruction, actually cannot find the time, and have not the energy, necessary to properly perform the duty? They are taxed to the full amount of both their mental and physical energies, and cannot attempt anything more. Almost every woman knows, that it is easier to do the work, herself, than it is to teach an awkward and careless novice; and the great majority of women, in this country, are obliged to do almost everything in the shortest and easiest way. This is one reason why the daughters of very energetic and accomplished housekeepers are often the most deficient in these respects; while the daughters of ignorant or inefficient mothers, driven to the exercise of their own energies, often become the most systematic and expert."

These facts are but too real. They are true in a mournfully wide extent, and occasion sufferings most sad and fearful to think of. Can anything be done to lessen them? We think much can be done; and, if in any way, better by means of the school than any other.

"It may be objected that such things cannot be taught by books."

Why not? Why may not the structure of the human body, the great processes which go on within it, and the laws of health deduced therefrom, be as well taught, and as fully comprehended, as anything in natural philosophy? Why are not the application of these laws to the management of young children and the care of infants, and to the judicious care of the sick, as obvious and as important as the application of the rules of arithmetic and of algebra, to the extracting the square root and the solution of quadratic equations? Why may not the properties of the atmosphere and its constituents be made as interesting, when so explained as to show the necessity of well-ventilated rooms, and of exercise in the open air, as when used to illustrate the burning of steel or of sodium? Why is not the human skeleton as curious and wonderful as an air-pump? and the action and uses of the brain, as the action and uses of a steam-engine? The experience of twenty years, spent in teaching, convinces us that these practical applications of philosophical truths are beyond measure more interesting than the mere theoretical principles of any science. Why may not the considerations that relate to the healthiness of the several kinds of food and of drink, and their modes of preparation previous to cooking and by cooking, and the modes, times, and limits of taking them, be as well taught in school, as the considerations which belong to matters of history or of grammar? Are they not equally simple? Do they not commend themselves as naturally to the business and feelings of children? Are not the principles to be observed in the kinds and quantities of clothing, the rules of cleanliness, the advantages of early rising and of domestic exercise, as easily communicated, and as readily received, as the principles of mineralogy, the rules of syntax, or the advantages of the atomic theory in chemistry? Are not the prin-

ciples of Christian morals, applied, as the Saviour intended they should be applied, to refining domestic manners, and giving the sweet charm of a good temper and habitual and cheerful benevolence, as capable of being made attractive to children, as the abstract principles of ethics as taught by Paley or Jouffroy? May not the advantages of habits of system and order be as intelligently and as successfully illustrated by showing how they save time and money and contribute to happiness in a family, as by showing how they add beauty to the contents of a desk, a copy-book, or a portfolio of drawings or of geometrical figures? Would not a teacher be as well employed in explaining the rules of a wise economy of time and expenses, that the store may be enlarged for gifts of charity, and in showing, by book and conversation, what considerations should guide us in giving, as he would in explaining the figures of speech or the rules of double position? Are not the principles by which we should be guided in the structure, arrangement, warming, and ventilation of a house, as likely to attract and occupy the attention of boys and girls, as the principles of the Athenian commonwealth or the rules of Roman tactics? Is it not quite as important that children should be made familiar with the conditions of action of the mental faculties, the dangers of their being over-excited on the one hand, or of their being left unoccupied on the other, as that they should be indoctrinated in the conflicting theories of the political economists, or the speculations of metaphysicians?

We have here contrasted the subjects of the leading chapters in this excellent work with those which have formed the business of the higher schools, some of them from time immemorial; and we venture to say, that almost any unprejudiced individual would decide without hesitation in favor of the utility of the former, and of the probability of their being made interesting to children.

For ourselves, we have always found children, especially girls, peculiarly ready to listen to what they saw would prepare them for their future duties. The truth that education should be a preparation for actual, real life, has uniformly the greatest force with children. The constantly recurring inquiry, What will be the use of this study? is always completely satisfied, by showing that it will prepare for any duty, relation, or office, which, in the natural course of things, will be likely to come.

Many of these subjects require illustrations which can be given in few schools except by means of books. Plates of the skeleton, and of the nervous, digestive, and circulating systems, are essential; and only the cheap ones contained in books like this, can be placed within the reach of the majority of teachers. Plans of houses are of great value. This part of the work is quite as essential in schools for boys as in those for young ladies. Several of the plans in this volume are excellent; particularly those represented by figures 18, 23, and 24. The house represented by figure 18, should, we would suggest, have been contrived for two stories as well as one; and all these would be improved by being made square. By this alteration, each of

these plans would be rendered more commodious, with very little additional expense. Boys or girls, once made familiar with plans so simple and cheap, and uniting so many conveniences, would never consent to build the awkward, inconvenient, and uselessly expensive houses we often meet with.

Besides the chapter we have mentioned, boys would certainly be interested in those which relate to the care of yards and gardens, the propagation of plants, and the cultivation of fruit. The few paragraphs upon the management of animals might be enlarged into two or three chapters, which would be very delightful to nine tenths of the boys in the whole country. And few things could they be taught which would be more useful. All those chapters which treat of health of body or mind, economy of time and money, charity, habits of system and order, good temper and good manners, would be just as useful and as attractive to one sex as to the other.

If a book of this character were written expressly for boys, the introductory chapters would of course be occupied with the peculiarities in the position of American citizens; and the importance of their preparing themselves to understand the constitution and laws under which they live, would be pointed out. A chapter might come in upon the duties of jurymen, of witnesses, and of the lower officers of justice. In place of the chapters upon washing, ironing, and cleaning, might be introduced very interesting ones upon the structure and arrangement of barns and outhouses, the preservation and management of the forests, the economy of fuel, and the selection of materials for the works of all kinds required on a farm.

As it is, however, we think the book extremely well suited to be used as a text-book in schools for young ladies, and many chapters well adapted to take the place of a reading book in schools for both sexes. We regret that a work embodying so much thought and observation, and conceived in so high and benevolent a spirit, should be so carelessly written as in some parts it is. We had some things to say in regard to this. We find the awkward Americanism, *realize*, used in a great variety of significations, for—to feel, to feel strongly, to be deeply impressed, to be aware of, to have a vivid perception of, &c.; *obligated*, instead of obliged; *loves*, instead of likes, as applied to food; and the disagreeable word, *genteel*, in almost as many senses as realize. These, however, are mere vulgarisms, natural for a benevolent person to fall into who associates much with good, but ill-educated people, who have many strong feelings and a scanty vocabulary to express them. There are other faults of a more serious character. The author speaks of *making* oxygen and hydrogen;—as if children could be taught to make the elements! She ranks tea and coffee in the same category with alcohol, opium, and tobacco! How much injury does such extravagance do to the cause of temperance in the minds of *temperate* people.

In the midst of so much that is excellent, it is almost invidious to point out omissions. We think, however, that the admirable chapter on Health of the Mind would have been

improved by the suggestion that some study, some strictly intellectual pursuit, should occupy some minutes at least of every day. A hint might have been added as to the most essential studies for women, especially for mothers. Somewhere in the work, too, we think that she might have pointed out the vital importance of having a few well-selected volumes, carefully kept, that children, as well as parents, might be led to save "the precious filings of their gold." But we cannot look for faults or omissions without being soon arrested and silenced by some such noble passage as the following, showing that the author never lost sight of the highest purposes of existence—the deepest wants of the soul.

"The indications of a diseased mind, owing to a want of the proper exercise of its powers, are, apathy, discontent, a restless longing for excitement, a craving for unattainable good, a diseased and morbid action of the imagination, dissatisfaction with the world, and factitious interest in trifles which the mind feels to be unworthy of its powers. Such minds sometimes seek alleviation in exciting amusements; others resort to the grosser enjoyments of sense. Oppressed with the extremes of languor, or over-excitement, or apathy, the body fails under the wearing process, and adds new causes of suffering to the mind. Such, the compassionate Saviour calls to his service, in these appropriate terms: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me,' 'and ye shall find rest unto your souls.'"

G. B. E.

SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD
OF EDUCATION.

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On this view of the subject, may be founded the true philosophical definition of Youth and Old Age. Those who, by an intelligent attention to diet, pure air, exercise and cleanliness, cause frequent changes in the particles of which the body is composed, may be said to be *young*, at any age; while those who, by over-eating, uncleanness of person, and a deficient oxygenation of the blood, whether by breathing impure air, by a compression of the chest, or by inactive habits of life, effect no such change in the constituent particles of which their bodies are composed, may, with equal truth, be called *old* at any age, after the days of infancy have passed. In this sense, it is often literally true that one individual at seventeen may be older than another at seventy; and some children of seven years of age are already superannuated.

In the account of the miraculous feeding of the children of Israel with manna in the wilderness, it is related that no skill could preserve the heaven-descended bread in a state of purity, (with the exception of the Sabbath,) but for a single day; and the sacred historian uses very pungent and unsavory words, in

describing the odious qualities of that which was kept for a longer period; but the manna of the second or of the third day's keeping must have had ambrosial sweetness, as compared with the whole substance and animal economy of those who, by contemning useful labor, or thinking it ungenteel to practise vigorous exercises, fail *to renew, frequently, the whole substance of the body.*

Labor was appointed at the creation. At the same time that God made man, He made a garden, and ordered him to "dress it and keep it,"—that is, to *work* in it; and, of course, to prepare the necessary utensils to aid him in its cultivation. Hence agriculture and the mechanic arts are coëval with the race, and are of divine institution. All mankind have been, now are, and we may suppose always will be, created with the same necessity for bodily exertion as Adam was. If labor were not necessary for the fruits it produces, it would be so for ourselves. Nor can I concede that those who would rear their children without some industrial occupation, or without systematic muscular exercise of some kind, are wiser than the Maker of the race; or that they love their offspring better than He loved our first parents before they had committed any transgression. Although, in a certain narrow sense, it is sometimes said that labor is a curse, yet, as it is the inevitable condition of our well-being in this life, those who strive to avoid this curse, always incur a greater one.

Among the most pernicious consequences resulting from a general ignorance of physiology, is the prevalent opinion that a weakly child must be prepared for a profession, or apprenticed to some in-door occupation. The plain statement of this reasoning is, that because a child is weak and puny at the beginning, he must be subjected by his training to further enervating processes. Instead of selecting an employment by which the feeble would be fortified, they are subjected to new debilitations. If deficiency of constitutional vigor is a plausible argument in favor of discarding healthful occupations, in regard to one generation, it must be decisive for the next, and must continue to gather force as the family deteriorates. Hence, to a great extent, that abandonment by our young men of the invigorating employments of agriculture and the handicrafts, the consequent crowding of the professions, and the eager competition for inactive occupations,—an evil self-aggravating, and reproductive of its own kind, manifold. If the weakly and ignorant father cannot work out of doors, he will be likely so to rear his children that they cannot work even in the house; and the grandchildren will be able to work nowhere. Each generation of such a lineage adds something to the stock of debility and disease which it inherits, and entails the whole upon its posterity.

The slightest acquaintance with the laws of health will teach us another most important fact. Every day, we hear people, who are suffering under some form of indisposition, wondering what could have occasioned it, and protesting that they had subjected themselves to no more than ordinary exer-

tions or exposures. This may be very true, and yet a fatal disease be contracted. *Life* is an active power, but it is constantly surrounded and assailed by the ever-active agencies of nature, which, in a certain sense, are hostile to it. Hence, as soon as the body ceases to be animated, it is speedily decomposed by these natural agencies, and reduced to its original elements. Now the vital force is subject to great changes. After severe bodily effort, after great mental anxiety and exhaustion, or after a change from active to inactive habits, from breathing pure air to breathing that which is impure, and from various other debilitating causes, the energy of the vital force is reduced; and it is then in danger of being overborne by exterior forces which before were harmless. Suppose the ordinary vital force to be represented by *one hundred*, and the usual assailing forces to be equal to *fifty*. It is obvious that, in such a case, the latter will be subordinated to the former, and become ministers to its welfare. But suppose, from any debilitating cause whatever, the efficiency of the vital force is reduced to *twenty-five*; then it is equally obvious, that it must succumb to the antagonist forces of nature,—now twice as strong as itself,—and the individual who before had put forth exertions or confronted exposures with impunity, is now instantaneously overborne in the encounter. A clear perception of this truth would shield our health from many dangers.

A man in perfect health may be said to be lord over the climate in which he lives; but if health be broken down, the climate is lord over him. All nature seems to wage war upon him;—treating him as some tribes of wild animals are said to treat any one of their number which has broken a limb, or become decrepit with age,—all falling upon him to kill him. The food, which before nourished, now distresses him. The cold winds, which once braced his frame and exhilarated his spirits, now inflict consumption and asthma upon him. Heat fevers his blood, and every pore becomes an inlet through which disease enters. Health alone can place us in harmony with external nature.

Another prolific source of evil would be removed by a knowledge of physiology. All ignorant people regard disease as some foreign substance or body, which has effected a lodgment in one or another part of the frame, and whose removal is necessary to the restoration of health. They make no distinction between an organ and its function,—between the agent and the office it performs. Hence their remedial measures are all designed to expel some intruder, instead of substituting a healthy for a diseased action in any vital organ. Their imaginations personify disease, as an impurity in the blood, or a foul accumulation in the stomach; and the impostors who prey upon their ignorance and credulity have no difficulty in creating evidence to confirm their belief, by giving such medicines as make the dupes declare they do not wonder they were sick. If the simple difference between an organ and its function were understood, it would put an end to an otherwise endless amount of quackery.

Suppose the intimacy of the relation which exists between the brain and the stomach to be generally known, and the very selfishness, as well as the reason and conscience of men, would remonstrate against all intemperance, whether of appetite or of passion. The *pneumo-gastric* nerve connects the brain directly with the stomach, and establishes such a sympathy between them, that each becomes a sufferer from any abuse or misfortune of the other. Let a man in high health, with the keenest appetite, when sitting down to enjoy the most attractive meal, be suddenly informed of some great calamity which has befallen his reputation or his fortunes, and not only does his appetite vanish, but he is seized with intolerable loathing and nausea at the mere thought of the food, which had before diffused so agreeable a stimulus over his system. This is the effect of the brain on the stomach, through the medium of the pneumogastric nerve. So, if anything highly acrid or noxious is taken into the stomach of the greatest philosopher or statesman, his luminous and mighty mind is plunged into darkness; it reels, or is stricken with temporary madness or paralysis, beneath the injury. If these facts were really understood and believed, as clearly as we understand and believe that fire will burn, what an argument would they furnish against malevolence or misanthropy; and what a dissuasive against bringing into contact with the delicate coats of the stomach,—as the ignorant so often do,—those fiery compounds of food or beverage, those hot and acrid condiments which, if applied to the palms of the hands or the soles of the feet, would actually blister and excoriate them. Never did the crew of a foundering vessel shriek louder for help, than the brain cries out for relief under such inflictions. Knowledge alone can interpret its powerful remonstrances.

Again; if the principles of physiology were understood, every discreet man could modify their application to suit his varying circumstances of health or condition. No two individuals have identically the same constitution, or powers of action or of resistance. But a book cannot be written for every man. So no one individual remains always in the same condition of strength or health. But no man can always have a medical adviser at his side. Each one, therefore, should be master of general principles, to be modified by himself according to ever-changing circumstances. Each man should know, too, that no great enlargement of his powers, either of body or mind, can be effected at once; but that almost any enlargement, however great, may be effected by degrees.

I have thus, although in a manner necessarily cursory and imperfect, glanced at certain leading principles and observances, the knowledge and practice of which are essential to the promotion of human health, the prolongation of human life, the extension of human usefulness, and the rearing of a nobler race of men and women. Restricted, however, within narrow limits, as compared with the extent of the subject, I have felt constrained to omit many considerations of an interesting and useful character. My only hope and object have been, so to exhibit the practical and immediate utility of understanding

this subject, that every reader, even of this brief outline, would be stimulated to seek for more extensive and exact information.

As my whole life and studies have been devoted to pursuits foreign to that of the healing art, and as I have never enjoyed any greater opportunity to become acquainted with the laws of health and life, than are possessed by almost any member of the community, I can hardly hope to have escaped all errors and mistakes in the views above presented. Still less can I suppose, that I have unfolded the manifold merits of the subject, or given such attractiveness to its charms, or prominence to its importance, as any gentleman of the medical profession would have done. But, deeply commiserating those sufferings and calamities of my fellow-beings, which seem to me to be no part of the ordination of a merciful Providence, but to be directly chargeable to human ignorance and error, I have felt an irresistible impulse to point out the way for their relief, or, at least, for their mitigation. Any degree of knowledge which shall begin the great work of enlightening the public mind on this theme, must be accounted valuable. On this, as on all other topics, limited acquisitions must precede higher attainments, as certainly as the twilight must come before the morning. It is no argument against attempting to diffuse knowledge, that it cannot be made perfect and universal at once. Three quarters of a century ago, the fact of the identity of electricity and lightning was known to scarcely a dozen men in the world. Now, it is not only a matter of universal knowledge among the educated, but even children are familiar with it; and every individual in the community participates in the practical benefits of the discovery of Franklin. In the same way, an acquaintance with the fundamental laws of health and life, may be and must be *popularized*. The reasons are far stronger in the latter case than in the former; for where lightning has ever destroyed one victim, or one dollar's worth of property, the infraction of the physical laws has destroyed its thousands of lives, and its millions of wealth. It may be alleged, indeed, that if a knowledge of physiology should become the common possession of mankind, it would produce only partial benefits, because men will not *act* as well as they know how to act. But with equal truth it may be said that all men do not use those means of protection, which are founded on the science of electricity. Yet it cannot be denied, on the other hand, that multitudes do avail themselves of that protection, and that an immense amount of life and property is thus annually saved, which would otherwise be lost. But let the truth of the allegation be admitted in its fullest extent; the answer is, *that men will never act better than they know*; and hence, though reform and amelioration may not, in all cases, follow knowledge, yet they will follow it in many, while they will precede it in none.

It may be said further, that the great body of our teachers are incompetent to give instruction in this science. The answer to this is, that, if not competent, they should become so; for no person is qualified to have the care of children, for a single day, who is ignorant of the leading principles of physiology.

All writers on education maintain that the course of a pupil's instruction should be modified, to some extent, according to his future calling or destination in life; and the common sense of the community ratifies their opinion. All admit that the future mechanic should study the principles of natural philosophy; the future merchant, book-keeping; the sailor, navigation, and so forth. If all, then, ought to aim at the enjoyment of good health and long life, all ought to become acquainted with the principles of physiology.

In bringing this Report to a close, I would add, that what I have said of the comparative merits of this study, is not intended as the slightest disparagement of any other which is pursued in our schools. For all of them, in their appropriate places, I have a due appreciation. Nor would I have any of the common or elementary branches displaced for the introduction of this. But when considered as a competitor, for adoption, among the more advanced studies now pursued, I believe that its intrinsic merits entitle it to an unquestionable priority. The greatest happiness and the greatest usefulness can never be attained, without that soundness of physical organization which confers the power of endurance, and that uninterrupted enjoyment of health which ransoms the whole of our time and means from sickness and its expenditures. In the great work of education, then, our physical condition, if not the first step in point of importance, is the first in the order of time. On the broad and firm foundation of health alone, can the loftiest and most enduring structures of the intellect be reared; and if, on the sublime heights of intellectual eminence, the light of duty and of benevolence,—of love to God and love to man,—can be kindled, it will send forth a radiance to illumine and bless mankind.

HORACE MANN,

Secretary of the Board of Education.

BOSTON, *January 3, 1843.*

NOTICE.—The Editor of this Journal has fulfilled the expectations expressed in the last number, by returning home at the time he had fixed. We regret, however, to say that the fatigue of a long, rough and uncomfortable voyage, and the pressure of accumulated duties of his office, will prevent his fully resuming his charge of the Journal before the end of the next month.

NORMAL SCHOOL AT BRIDGEWATER.—The next term of this School begins on Wednesday, the 6th day of December, 1843, at which time applicants for admission will undergo an examination in Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar, Arithmetic, and Geography.

Those who enter the School are required to do so with the intention of remaining at least two terms, which, however, need not be successive.

Each pupil must bring a certificate of intellectual ability, and good moral habits. Males must be at least 17 and females at least 16 years of age. For further particulars inquire at the School, or at the office of this Journal.

N. TILLINGHAST, *Principal.*

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